

## Chapter 7. CONSULTATION

An integral part of all the Department's marine resource management programs includes consulting with other agencies and qualified professionals in pertinent fields. To this end, Department staff involved in herring resource management are continually in contact with other agencies, professional biologists and researchers involved in herring management. Concurrent with maintaining close informal contact (telephone and meetings in the field) with these professionals, Department personnel also maintain formal contact by attending professional workshops, conferences and seminars.

Consultations also occur during the annual review of regulations guiding the commercial harvest of herring. The process is initiated when the Department presents their management recommendations to a Herring Advisory Committee established by the Director. The Committee is comprised of representatives from each of the three gill net platoons in the San Francisco Bay fishery, two representatives from the round haul fleet, one representative from the Tomales-Bodega Bay area, one from the Eureka-Crescent City area, and two representatives from fish processors. They meet annually, in March, to review the status of the fishery and provide recommendations, as necessary, for regulatory change.

The Department's recommendations are modified, as necessary, based on the Committee's comments and presented at several public hearings. The recommendations are again modified, as necessary, based on information and comments received during the public hearings and are then presented to the Fish and Game Commission.

Prior to preparation of the draft environmental document, the Department initiated a broader consultation by distributing a notice of preparation (NOP) that announced the intent to prepare the document. The NOP requested submittal of views on the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained therein. The notice was distributed to members of the public and interested organizations that had expressed prior interest in herring management. The NOP was also provided to the State Clearinghouse for distribution to appropriate responsible and trustee agencies.

Issues raised in response to the NOP and during the scoping session can be divided into the following four general categories:

1. Potential negative impacts on marine food webs that include herring eggs, juveniles, or adults.
  - role of herring as forage for other fish, sea birds, and marine mammals, particularly salmon, striped bass, common murre, sea lion, and humpback whale
  - effect of harvest on plankton resources
2. Potential negative impacts on resources in the vicinity where herring are being harvested.
  - effect of harvest on stock, particularly the potential for stock collapse, changes in average



- size of fish, and validity of management practices
  - effect of incidental take, particularly on striped bass, and sturgeon
  - intentional take of sea lions
  - effects of lost gear
  - precision of spawning population estimates
  - effect on recruitment
  - effect of oil or chemical spills
3. Potential negative impacts on habitat associated with the harvest of herring.
    - effect of harvest on selection of spawning sites
  4. Potential negative impacts on human uses of area in the vicinity where herring are being harvested.
    - effect on salmon, halibut, striped bass, rockfish and other sport and commercial fisheries

Every effort has been made to consider relevant issues brought forth in response to the NOP in the draft environmental document, including development of alternatives to the proposed project.